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**66th TEXACO CHILDREN’S ART COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Kerry student is overall 2020 Competition winner**
Casey Etherton, a Leaving Certificate student at Coláiste na Sceilge in Caherciveen, has been chosen overall winner of this year's 66th Texaco Children's Art Competition, taking first prize in the senior 16-18 years age category. His winning work, for which he receives a prize of €1,500, is entitled ‘Kevin In The Pink’ and is a detailed and carefully executed study in oils of a neighbour who lives near to his home in Caherdaniel.

In choosing it as overall prize winner in the Competition and the first prize entry in the senior Category A age group, Final Adjudicator and Chairman of the judging panel, Professor Declan McGonagle described Casey’s piece as “an exceedingly lifelike and sensitive painting in which the subject is caught in a thoughtful moment.”  Through it, Casey reveals a skill that Professor McGonagle said, “is found in the way he used light and brush marks to convey his subject so successfully.”

Youngest of two children, Casey hails from an artistic family – his father is in television production and his mother a writer and editor, while two of his grandparents were also prominent in areas of creativity, one as an author and another in art education.

Studying under the guidance of Ms. Fiona Holly, his art teacher at Coláiste na Sceilge, Casey refers to himself as one who has ‘always been drawn to art‘. Inspired by the techniques of Rembrandt, he points to portraiture as a particular interest and cites pencil and charcoal as his most frequently used mediums. His ambition is to further his interest in art through studies at third level, with the aim of building a future career in animation.

In winning the coveted overall prize and first place in the Category A age group, Casey and his fellow winners fought off the challenge from the over 25,000 young artists from across Ireland who took part in the Competition. Amongst them are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and the fifteen Special Merit awards recipients in each of seven categories for which prizes are presented, including a category reserved for special needs children.

In **Category A**(16-18 years)other topwinners were Róisín Long (age 18), a pupil at Sandford Park School, Ranelagh who won second prize (€1,000) for her work entitled ‘Inchydoney Beach’, and Katie Cumiskey (age 16), a pupil at Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney who won third prize (€750) for her work entitled ‘Everything But The Kitchen Sink’.

In **Category B**(14-15 years), first prize (€450) was won by Donegal student P. J. Doherty (age 15) from St. Eunan's College, Letterkenny for his self-portrait. Second prize (€350) was won by Amy Zhao (age 15), a pupil at Our Lady's Bower Secondary School, Athlone for her work entitled ‘Girl In A Jumper’. No stranger to the Competition, Amy previously won first prize in the 12-13 years age category of the 2017 Competition and a Special Merit Award in the same category in 2018. Third prize (€250) went to Sarah Mullaney (age 15), a pupil at Scoil Muire Agus Pádraig, Swinford, for her work entitled ‘Paper Face’.

In **Category C**(12-13 years), first prize (€350) went to Luke Joyce (age 13) from St. Benildus College, Kilmacud Road, Dublin for his self-portrait entitled ‘Bad Hair Day’. A previous winner, Luke won first prize in the 9-11 years age category of the 2018 Competition. Second prize (€250) was won by 13-year old student Aoibhín Mac Cinna from Coláiste Oiriall, Monaghan for her work entitled ‘Ros Mór Rúnda’ while third prize (€200) went to Victoria Geraghty (age 13) from Scoil Mhuire, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon for her self-portrait entitled ‘Just Me’.

In **Category D**(9-11 years), first prize (€250) has been won by 9-year old Jiaming Zheng, a pupil at St. Brigid's Boys' National School, Foxrock for a work entitled ‘I Love My Mom’. Second prize (€200) was won by Muirne Leyden (age 11), a pupil at Creative Processes in Rathoe, Co. Carlow for her work entitled ‘High As A Kite’. Third prize (€150) went to Edie Collins (age 11) from Ballinspittle National School, Kinsale, for her work entitled ‘Billie Eilish - Caution!’.

In **Category E**(7-8 years), first prize (€200) was won by 8-year old Marc Long of Georgian Montessori School in Dublin City for his work entitled ‘Myself’. Second prize (€150) was won by Isla Gibson (age 8) from Rowandale Integrated Primary School in Moira, Co. Down for her work entitled ‘My Cousin Eve’. In 2018, Isla won a Special Merit Award in the 6 years and under category of the Competition. Third prize (€125) went to Johan Felix (age 8), from Scoil Eoin Phóil II Naofa, Tullamore, for his work entitled ‘Bee In The Flower’.

In **Category F**(6 years and younger) – the youngest age group in the Competition – two top prizes went to pupils from Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny. First prize (€150) was won by 5-year old Eleana Hughes from Stoneyford National School for her work entitled ‘Minding Julian's Pumpkin Field’ while second prize (€125) went to James Healy (age 6), a pupil at Scoil Chiaráin Naofa in Stoneyford for his work entitled ‘Two Dinosaurs’. Third prize (€100) went to Jake O'Doherty (age 5), a pupil at St. Brigid's Boys' National School, Killester, Dublin, for his work entitled ‘Moooo’.

In **Category G**, reserved for entries from young artists of all ages with special needs, first prize of €400 was won by 14-year old James Moonan, a pupil at The Arthouse, Drogheda, Co. Louth for his work entitled ‘Darragh At The Restaurant’. In the same category, James also won first prize in last year’s Competition, second prize in 2018 and a Special Merit Award in 2017. Second prize (€300) went to Alexis Appiah (age 11), a pupil at Lusk Senior National School, Co. Dublin for a work entitled ‘The Boy In The Shadow’ while third prize (€200) went to Willow Murphy (age 15), a pupil at St. Augustine's School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, for a work entitled ‘Vase Of Flowers’.

**Comment - James Twohig**Praising all of the winners, not least those in younger age groups and special needs categories for whom, he said, “the sense of personal achievement, pride and delight that success brings is all the more sweet.”  James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations for Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited – the company that markets fuel in Ireland under the Texaco brand – thanked parents and the many teachers from schools throughout Ireland who, he said, “have continued to give encouragement and support to the many thousands of young artists who have entered the Competition over the course of its 66 year history.”

Interrupted this year by the onset of Covid-19, which forced a delay in bringing the Competition to a conclusion, Mr. Twohig noted that, “due to restrictions, activities normally undertaken during April and May, such as the introduction of winners to the media and the presentation of prizes, had to be set aside on this occasion. As a result, prizes will be delivered directly to the winners without the possibility of an awards ceremony.”

**Judging**Chairman of the Judging Panel and Final Adjudicator is Professor Declan McGonagle, former Director of the National College of Art & Design and a prominent figure in Irish contemporary art. Supporting Professor McGonagle in the adjudication process was a group of preliminary judges, each one a distinguished figure in the world of art in Ireland. They are: Dr. Denise Ferran (artist, art historian, and former President of the Royal Ulster Academy), Eoin Butler (Artist & Lecturer in Visual Arts), Seán Kissane (Curator: Exhibitions, IMMA), Aoife Ruane (Director, Highlanes Municipal Art Gallery, Drogheda) and Colleen Watters (Head of Learning & Partnership, Ulster Museum, Belfast).

**Ireland’s longest-running Sponsorship**The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is popularly regarded as the longest-running sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland, with an unbroken history that dates back to the very first Competition held in 1955. This year, as has been the case throughout its life, it has been a platform on which young artists have had their talents recognised and a springboard on which many have risen to national prominence. Aside from giving students the space to give expression to their talent and skill, the Competition has focused a spotlight on the quality of art teaching in Irish schools and the importance that the educational establishment attaches to the subject of art education.

Past winners whose early interest in art and the arts may well have been encouraged by their participation in the Competition include artists Graham Knuttel, Robert Ballagh, Bernadette Madden, Dorothy Cross, fashion designer Paul Costelloe, and artist and former broadcaster Thelma Mansfield. Other notable past winners include former Minister, Ruairi Quinn (a four-times winner), communications consultant and broadcaster Terry Prone, Chairman of the Pension Authority David Begg, actress Jean Anne Crowley, musician Ethna Tinney, Trinity College Professor of Contemporary Irish History Eunan O’Halpin and the late novelist Clare Boylan.

ENDS.

**Editor’s Notes:**

1. The Texaco Children’s Art Competition is celebrating its 66th anniversary this year. For further information about the Competition, contact Ashley Hall (mobile 086-3127774) or Don Hall (mobile 087-2552699) at Hall PR on 01-660 9377 (office) or email pr@hall.ie. For more information on Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited, contact Bronagh Carron on (+353) 01 6258208 or email bronagh.carron@valero.com
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